anti-dumping duty by USA. In regard to the safeguard investigation a pre-hearing brief on remedy *inter-alia* containing certain suggestions including recommendation of a country specific quota for India has been submitted to the concerned US authorities on behalf of Government of India.

Revival of Salem Steel Plant

2112. SHRI GAYA SINGH :

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to seek private investment for revival of Salem Steel Plant; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY) : (a) and (b) To make Salem Steel Plant (SSP) viable, SAIL has been exploring the possibility of a Joint Venture (JV) for SSP. The JV partner is expected to be able to invest the required funds for making SSP viable. At present, SAIL is in the process of selection of such a partner.

Retrenchment of Sail Employees

†2113. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI :

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the employees of Steel Authority of India are being continuously retrenched for the last three years; and

(b) if so, the number of employees working in all the units of Steel Authority of India during March, 1998 and during March, 2001?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) The number of employees working in SAIL in March 1998 was 176147 and in March 2001 was 156719. This reduction in number is the result of the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) of the company.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.